

Essay Checklist and Grading Rubric

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH (10 points total)

1. Start with a lead sentence that relates to the significance of choices or advice (1 point).
2. Write a 1-3 sentence summary of each text that includes the name(s) of the author(s) and titles of the text. The summary should include important plot details and revolve around your main character. Be sure to explain the setting of the text (2 points).
3. Describe the conflict that each main character faces AND give experiences that have guided or influenced his or her life, decisions, and outlook to provide the back-story or context to understand each character's conflict (2 points).
4. Identify two courses of action that the characters have to choose between or advise others to take (2 points).
5. Thesis statement: State your claims about the characters' choices or advice to others and compare and contrast their decisions, and identify what that conduct reveals about those character and their identity, family or community (3 points).

FIRST BODY PARAGRAPH (10 points total)

1. Use a transition word and write a **topic sentence** about the first claim (2 points).
2. Support your first claim about the first selected character with a **textual example** from the text about the character's choice or advice (1 point).
3. Add a **quote** with proper citation that matches the character's choice or advice (1 point).
4. Explain the quote in your own words and evaluate how the textual example and the matching quote support the first claim (1 point).
5. Use another transition to add a **second textual example** TO EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE or REASON behind the character's choice or advice (1 point).
6. Add a **quote** with proper citation that reveals and matches the reason behind the character's choice or advice (1 point).
7. Include ONE or more **lines from the poem** that supports this character's conduct and purpose or reason. Cite the poetry as (Poet Name, "Poem Title," lines _ - _) (1 point).
8. Explain the quote and poetry lines in your own words and use them to support the PURPOSE and REASON for the character's choice or advice (2 points).

SECOND BODY PARAGRAPH (10 points total)

1. Use a transition word and write a **topic sentence** about the second claim (2 points).
2. Support your claim about the second selected character with a **textual example** from the text about the character's choice or advice (1 point).
3. Add a **quote** with proper citation that matches the character's choice or advice (1 point).
4. Explain the quote in your own words and evaluate how the textual example and the matching quote support the second claim (1 point).
5. Use another transition to add a **second textual example** TO EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE or REASON behind the character's choice or advice (1 point).
6. Add a **quote** with proper citation that reveals and matches the reason behind the character's choice or advice (1 point).
7. Include ONE or more **lines from the poem** that supports this character's conduct and purpose or reason. Cite the poetry as (Poet Name, "Poem Title," lines _ - _) (1 point).
8. Explain the quote and poetry lines in your own words and use them to support the PURPOSE and REASON for the character's choice or advice (2 points).

CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH (5 points)

1. Write a "clincher" sentence to explain the similar or separate lessons that are learned by the characters that make choices or give advice to others (2.5 points).
2. Use those lessons to give advice about how people should make important life decisions at the crossroads (2.5 points).

LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR (15 points)

1. You avoid first person and second person pronouns (I, you , me us, we, our) (5 points).
2. You include specific and vivid words and avoid vague words (good, bad, nice, stuff, things, okay) (3 points).
3. You use complete sentences and do not use fragments (2 points).
4. You use correct capitalization and spelling of proper nouns for names of main characters and geographic locations and for words that follow the IE rule, include homophones, are plural nouns, or third person singular verbs in the present tense (5 points).

Advice and Reminders for Your Essay

- Your essay should not use first or second person (Avoid I, me, you, we, us, our).
- Each body paragraph must include TWO direct quotes that are provided in the OFFICIAL QUOTE BANK from each text with analysis of how each quotation fits your overall advice, textual examples, AND lines from the poem.
- The checklist for the essay is the also the grading rubric. Please utilize it to write your essay and to review it.
- Cite the texts using the following in-text citation format that includes the author(s) name followed by the page number. **Examples: Gene admits that he intended to kill Finny when he says, "I was on active duty all my time at school; I killed my enemy there" (Knowles 204).**

8th Grade English Final -- Essay Rubric

COMPONENT OF ESSAY	Not Done or Insufficient	Developing	Good	Excellent
Introduction paragraph: You wrote a lead sentence that directly relates to crossroads and choices that different characters make. You include a summary of each text and provide the setting, back-story and conflict for the characters. You include author names, titles, and a thesis statement summarizing your observations of character choices or advice at the crossroads.	0-5 You don't write a lead and only include brief summaries of the text that are not accurate or relevant to the conflict of the main characters. The back-story of their crossroads event is incomplete, and you include one of the authors and titles. You write a thesis statement that relates to plot details but not character choices or advise.	6-7 You don't write a lead and only include brief summaries of the text that are not accurate or relevant to the conflict of the main characters. The back-story of their crossroads event is incomplete, but you include both authors and titles and write a thesis statement that relates to plot details but not character choices or advise.	8-9 You write a general lead and include mostly all accurate and relevant summaries of the text that trace the conflict of the main characters and the back-story of their crossroads event. You include both authors and titles and write a thesis statement that relates to character choices or advise.	10 You write a thematic lead and include all accurate and relevant summaries of the text that trace the conflict of the main characters and the back-story of their crossroads event. You include both authors and titles and write a thesis statement that relates to character choices or advise.
Body paragraphs: Consistent with the checklist, for each paragraph , you write a lead sentence and identified two specific examples and two matching quotes with proper citation to explore and analyze the choice or advice made by a main character of a text at the crossroads and the reason behind the choice or advice. You include a line from the poem to explore the choice or advice or reason behind the choice or advice and give a citation for the poetry.	0-10 For each paragraph, you have a combination of 2 or fewer textual examples, quotes, and poetry lines that support your main idea. You don't explain the examples or quotes or use the poem to explore the underlying reasons for character conduct.	12-14 For each paragraph, you have a combination of 2-3 textual examples, quotes, and poetry lines that support your main idea. You don't analyze the examples or quotes, but you use the poem to explore the underlying reasons for the character conduct.	16-18 For each paragraph, you have a combination of 3-5 textual examples, quotes, and poetry lines that support your main idea. You analyze the examples and quotes, but you don't use the poem to explore the underlying reasons for character conduct.	20 For each paragraph, you have 4-6 textual examples, quotes and poetry lines that support your main idea. You explain the examples and quotes and use the poem to explore the underlying reasons for character conduct.

<p>Conclusion Paragraph: Consistent with the checklist you write a “clincher” sentence to explain the similar or separate lessons that are learned by the characters that choose or advise others.</p> <p>You use those lessons to give advice about how people should make crossroad choices.</p>	<p>0-2 Your conclusion sentence identifies one of the character’s choice or advice, but doesn’t relate a thematic lesson or give specific advice about how people should make crossroad choices.</p>	<p>3-3.75 Your conclusion sentences identify important lessons learned by one character and give general advice about how people should make crossroads choices.</p>	<p>4-4.5 Your conclusion sentences identify important thematic lessons learned by both character, but give non-specific advice about how people should make crossroad choices.</p>	<p>5 Your conclusion sentences identify important thematic lessons that are learned by both characters and give detailed advice about how people should make crossroad choices.</p>
<p>Language and Grammar: Consistent with the checklist, you avoid first person and second person pronouns (I, you , me, us, we, our).</p> <p>You include specific and vivid words and avoid vague words (good, bad, nice, stuff, things, okay).</p> <p>You use complete sentences and do not use fragments.</p> <p>You use correct capitalization and spelling of proper nouns for names of main characters, authors and geographic locations and for words that follow the IE rule, include homophones, are plural nouns, or third person singular verbs in the present tense.</p> <p>You accurately and correctly cite the quotations and lines from the texts and the poem.</p>	<p>0-8 You use more than 5 person pronouns and there are 6 or more errors in grammar or punctuation. Some of your vocabulary is specific but there are many vague words Some characters names and geographic locations are either spelled wrong or are not properly capitalized. Many mistakes are made with respect to the page or line numbers, titles of the texts and poem, and the names of the authors.</p>	<p>9-11 You use more than 3 first and second pronouns and there are 3-5 errors in grammar or punctuation. Most of your vocabulary is specific but there are some vague words. Character names are spelled correctly, but some geographic locations are not properly spelled or capitalized. A few mistakes are made with respect to the page numbers, titles of the texts and poem, and the names of the authors.</p>	<p>12-14 You use 1-2 first and second pronouns and most proper nouns (names of characters, states, countries, etc.) are correctly spelled and capitalized. Most of your vocabulary is specific and there are only a few vague words. Page numbers, line numbers, and titles of texts and poem, and their authors’ names are mostly accurate and properly recorded.</p>	<p>15 You avoid first and second person pronouns and there are no errors in grammar or punctuation. All of your vocabulary is specific. All proper nouns (names of characters, states, countries, etc.) are correctly spelled and capitalized. Page and line numbers, titles of texts and poem, and names of their authors are correct and properly recorded.</p>

ESSAY TOTAL = /50